United Nations CRPD/C/LTU/CO/1*

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

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Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Concluding observations on the initial report of Lithuania**

I. Introduction

1. The Committee considered the initial report of Lithuania (CRPD/C/LTU/1) at its 246th and 247th meetings (see CRPD/C/SR.246 and 247), held on 6 and 7 April 2016. It adopted the present concluding observations at its 261st meeting, held on 18 April 2016.

2. The Committee welcomes the initial report of Lithuania, which was prepared in accordance with the Committee's reporting guidelines, and thanks the State party for its written replies (CRPD/C/LTU/Q/1/Add.1) to the list of issues prepared by the Committee (CRPD/C/LTU/Q/1).

3. The Committee appreciates the fruitful dialogue held with the State party's delegation during the consideration of the report and commends the State party for the strength of its delegation, which included many government representatives responsible for the implementation of the Convention.

II. Positive aspects

4. The Committee commends the State party for:

(a) Having raised public awareness with a view to eradicating negative attitudes towards and stereotypes associated with disability;

(b) Submitting to the Seimas (the parliament of Lithuania) the amendments to the Law on Elections and the Law on Referendum making it possible to vote using accessible electronic voting systems;

(c) Including organizations of persons with disabilities in the development of the national programme for the social integration of persons with disabilities for the period 2013-2019.

* Reissued for technical reasons on 2 June 2016.
** Adopted by the Committee at its fifteenth session (29 March-21 April 2016).

III. Principal areas of concern and recommendations

A. General principles and obligations (arts. 1-4)

5. The Committee is concerned that the definition and understanding of disability in State party laws and regulations focuses on the individual impairment, thereby neglecting the social and relational dimension of disability, including, in particular, the barriers faced by persons with disabilities.

6. **The Committee recommends that the State party amend the legal definition of disability in accordance with the criteria and principles provided in articles 1 to 3 of the Convention and that it effectively apply the amended legal definition in all laws and regulations.**

7. The Committee is concerned by the frequent use of derogatory language, such as "deaf-mute" and "disorder", when referring to persons with disabilities in legislation and data collection efforts, which perpetuate negative perceptions about persons with disabilities.

8. **The Committee recommends that the State party review and harmonize its legislation concerning the definition of persons with disabilities and in the collection of data related to such persons in such a way as to eliminate the use of all derogatory language to refer to persons with disabilities. The Committee also recommends that the State party ensure that all existing and new laws and regulations, and the definitions used therein, comply with the human rights-based model of disability, in accordance with the Convention.**

9. The Committee is concerned that between 2009 and 2014 there was a decrease in resources allocated for the support of persons with disabilities.

10. **The Committee recommends that the State party regularly evaluate the national budget and its use of the European Union structural and investment funds to ensure that the maximum available resources are being used for the realization of the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with article 4 (2) of the Convention. The Committee calls on the State party to provide, in its next periodic report, updated information on public spending demonstrating how social protection for persons with disabilities has been increasingly prioritized.**

11. The Committee notes with concern that organizations of persons with disabilities are not included in all decision-making processes relating to matters affecting them, in a timely manner and with sufficient support, in accordance with the provisions of article 4 (3) of the Convention.

12. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Develop, adopt and implement a strategy aimed at achieving the full inclusion of organizations of persons with disabilities in all political decision-making processes relating to matters affecting persons with disabilities, from the early stages and across all sectors, including in relation to the implementation and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals;**

(b) **Provide sufficient financial support to build the capacity and enable the autonomous participation of those organizations in all decision-making processes.**

B. Specific rights (arts. 5-30)

Equality and non-discrimination (art. 5)

13. The Committee is deeply concerned that the State party does not consistently apply the concept of reasonable accommodation in relation to the principle of non-discrimination.

14. **With reference to target 10.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals, the Committee recommends that the State party take all the legislative, juridical and administrative measures necessary to:**

(a) **Promote, ensure and monitor the provision of reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities across all public and private sectors;**

(b) **Recognize the denial of reasonable accommodation as a form of discrimination on the basis of disability.**

Women with disabilities (art. 6)

15. The Committee notes with concern the absence of concrete measures to prevent and eradicate discrimination against women and girls with disabilities as well as multidimensional discrimination of women and girls with disabilities based on other grounds, especially on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity, in the action plan for the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015-2021.

16. **The Committee recommends that the State party revise its action plan for the National Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men 2015-2021 to include an explicit focus on prevention and eradication of discrimination against women and girls with disabilities, including multiple and intersectional discrimination, as well as measures for their development, advancement and empowerment, in particular to foster their participation in public life. The Committee also recommends that the State party include measures to prevent and eradicate discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in the action plan.**

Children with disabilities (art. 7)

17. The Committee is concerned about:

(a) The lack of data and initiatives on protection from and prevention of sexual abuse and trafficking specifically targeting children with disabilities;

(b) The systematic lack of involvement of children with disabilities, especially children with intellectual or cognitive impairments and children with a reduced ability to express themselves vocally, in decision-making concerning their lives.

18. **The Committee strongly recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Develop and implement an appropriate plan of action to eliminate all forms of sexual abuse and violence against children with disabilities within and outside of institutions, and collect disaggregated data in order to evaluate the effectiveness of measures that would be adopted under such a plan of action;**

(b) **Take legislative and administrative measures to guarantee the right of children with disabilities to express their views on all matters affecting them, particularly in judicial and administrative procedures, recognizing their evolving capacity and giving due weight to their views in accordance with their age and maturity, and to be provided with disability- and age-appropriate assistance to realize this right.**

19. The Committee is concerned about the low number of children with disabilities and their families receiving support from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour and the narrow scope of support provided.

20. **The Committee recommends that the State party take measures to ensure that children with disabilities and their families receive the support that they need and that is appropriate given their individual requirements and develop the statistical tools necessary to measure the progress made in that respect.**

Accessibility (art. 9)

21. The Committee is concerned at the limited scope of measures taken and the reportedly insufficient progress made to promote the application of universal design principles in the physical environment and in transport, especially to improve accessibility within and around private and public buildings and throughout the chain of transport, including in parking spaces, in train stations, on platforms and in intercity buses, taxis and ferries. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of an effective mechanism for monitoring the accessibility of buildings.

22. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in line with its general comment No. 2 (2014) on accessibility and in close collaboration with organizations representing persons with disabilities:**

(a) **Develop and implement a plan of action with a clear time frame, measurable baselines and indicators, and regulations and standards to guarantee the progressive application of universal design principles to the physical environment, including in accessible housing and transport, in both urban and rural areas, with a view to ensuring accessibility for all persons with disabilities;**

(b) **Ensure that such a plan of action, regulations and standards encompass the physical, environmental, informational and communications aspects of accessibility for all persons with disabilities, provide for corresponding dissuasive sanctions and enforcement mechanisms and halt the use of European Union funds for the development of inaccessible constructions, websites and other infrastructure;**

(c) **Allocate the human and financial resources necessary for the effective implementation of such a plan of action, regulations and standards and establish mechanisms to monitor their implementation;**

(d) **Pay attention to the link between article 9 of the Convention and targets 11.2 and 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

Situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies (art. 11)

23. The Committee notes with concern that the requirements of persons with disabilities, especially those who are deaf, deaf blind or hard of hearing, are not explicitly factored into disaster response measures at the national and local levels, including the emergency call application called "GPIS112".

24. **The Committee recommends that the State party implement, in close collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities, initiatives securing the inclusion of persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard of hearing in emergency response and mitigation plans and adapt emergency call lines to respond to the requirements of persons who are deaf, deaf blind or hard of hearing through the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.**

Equal recognition before the law (art. 12)

25. The Committee is deeply concerned at the legal provisions permitting the denial or restriction of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities contrary to article 12 of the Convention, which thereby limit rights of persons with disabilities to give their free and informed consent for treatment, to marry, to found a family and to adopt and raise children.

26. **With reference to its general comment No. 1 (2014) on equal recognition before the law, the Committee recommends that the State party repeal laws, policies and practices permitting guardianship and trusteeship for adults with disabilities and replace regimes of substituted decision-making with regimes of supported decision-making.**

Access to justice (art. 13)

27. The Committee is concerned that the training courses available to judicial and law enforcement personnel do not cover all barriers faced by persons with disabilities who wish to gain access to the justice system and are insufficient in scope and number.

28. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities, develop and implement a national plan of action to build the capacity of judicial and law enforcement personnel, including judges, prosecutors, police officers and prison staff, to enhance their knowledge of the rights of persons with disabilities and to ensure the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodation in all legal procedures and of reasonable accommodation in prisons.**

Liberty and security of the person (art. 14)

29. The Committee is concerned that the Law on Mental Health (1995), the draft amendment to the Law on Mental Health Care and the Civil Code of 2000 allow for persons with psychosocial disabilities to undergo involuntary hospitalization and non-consensual treatment and to be subjected to indefinite or temporary restraints.

30. The Committee is also concerned at the lack of statistical data on the non-consensual treatment of persons with psychosocial disabilities, including when a guardian or family member consented to the treatment.

31. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Immediately repeal laws permitting deprivation of liberty based on impairment, forced treatment and the use of restraints and seclusion, and enact new legislation, prohibiting those practices, including within the current draft amendment to the Law on Mental Health Care;**

(b) **Involve organizations representing persons with psychosocial disabilities in the development of new legislation;**

(c) **Collect and use data to monitor and eliminate all forms of involuntary hospitalization and treatment of persons with psychosocial disabilities.**

Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art. 16)

32. The Committee is concerned about reported violence and unwarranted restriction of freedom of movement, including isolation, as a form of punishment in social care and psychiatric institutions.

33. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Improve monitoring and inspection of social care homes and psychiatric institutions to prevent violence against and abuse of residents with disabilities;

(b) Ensure that persons deprived of their liberty have access to independent complaints mechanisms;

(c) Provide adequate remedies to victims of abuse, such as redress and adequate compensation, including rehabilitation.

34. The Committee is concerned by:

(a) The high number of reports of women, boys and girls with intellectual and psychosocial disabilities facing violence and abuse, including sexual abuse, at institutions and at home;

(b) The lack of targeted measures such as the provision of accessible victim support services, including shelters and complaints and reporting mechanisms;

(c) The absence of independent monitoring authorities assigned to comply with article 16 (3) of the Convention;

(d) The lack of statistical data on exploitation, violence, trafficking and abuse in homes, schools, institutions, hospitals and prisons disaggregated by, among others, sex, age and disability.

35. **The Committee recommends that the State party strengthen the protection of persons with disabilities, particularly women and girls with disabilities, against violence, exploitation and abuse, as recommended by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW/C/LTU/CO/4), by establishing inclusive and accessible victim support services, including accessible hotlines, shelters and complaints and reporting mechanisms. The Committee also recommends that the State party strengthen awareness-raising efforts and the training of police officers, health professionals and social workers, among others, with a view to supporting persons with disabilities who have been affected by violence.**

36. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt and allocate sufficient funds to awareness-raising measures, that it collect disaggregated data and that it designate independent authorities to monitor services and facilities.**

Protecting the integrity of the person (art. 17)

37. The Committee is concerned about the provision of the Civil Code of 2000 that makes it possible for persons with disabilities who have been deprived of legal capacity to undergo, without their consent, surgical operations, including castrations, sterilizations, abortions and operations for the removal of organs, upon authorization by a court. It is also concerned at the lack of investigation of and data on the forced sterilization of persons with disabilities.

38. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) Abolish all practices of forced treatment, including non-consensual castrations, sterilizations and abortions, and eliminate the possibility for third parties such as guardians, doctors and the courts to approve such practices, in accordance with article 12 and the Committee's general comment No. 1;

(b) Provide training for judges and health-care workers on recognition of the legal capacity of persons with disabilities and the mechanisms of supported decision-making;

(c) **Collect disaggregated, reliable data on the forced sterilization of persons with disabilities.**

Living independently and being included in the community (art. 19)

39. The Committee is deeply concerned at the lack of sufficient choice and range of adequate support mechanisms, including independent living schemes, to ensure that persons with disabilities can access accommodation within their local community, regardless of their sex, age or impairment. In particular:

(a) Many children under 3 years of age with disabilities are still placed in residential institutions;

(b) There are no guarantees that all younger persons with disabilities have realistic options of choosing not to live in residential facilities for the elderly;

(c) There is no programme for individualized personal and financial assistance allowing persons with disabilities to live independently in the community, and a lack of range of community-based services.

40. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities:**

(a) **Adopt an adequately funded strategy for deinstitutionalization ensuring a range of community-based services for the social inclusion of persons with disabilities, including for children with intellectual and/or psychosocial impairments, including their right to live independently in the community, with the possibility of individualized personal assistance support services in their home;**

(b) **Effectively implement the action plan for the implementation of the national programme for the social integration of persons with disabilities for the period 2013-2019 at all levels of the State;**

(c) **Adopt a moratorium on new admissions of children into institutionalized care;**

(d) **Eliminate excessive waiting time for receiving support services by investing in developing new services and rendering existing services accessible and inclusive and ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sufficient financial resources for independent living and improved access to accessible services in the community.**

41. The Committee is concerned that the national budget and European Union structural funds have been used in renovating existing institutional facilities and in constructing new ones.

42. **The Committee recommends that the State party further prioritize investing in a social service system for independent living in the community, and immediately refrain from using national and structural funds of the European Union to renovate, maintain or construct residential institutions for persons with disabilities.**

Respect for home and the family (art. 23)

43. The Committee is deeply concerned that persons with disabilities, especially those deprived of their legal capacity, can be denied the right to marry, found a family and adopt and raise children.

44. **The Committee calls upon the State party to repeal provisions restricting these rights and to provide adequate support services to ensure that families with parents**

with disabilities and/or children with disabilities have the right to a family and a home.

Education (art. 24)

45. The Committee is concerned at reports that:

(a) Many students with disabilities, particularly those with visual, auditory, psychosocial or intellectual impairment, in preschool and primary and secondary education are referred to and obliged to attend special schools due to a lack of reasonable accommodation and accessibility in the mainstream educational system, among other reasons;

(b) All too often, the special education system or home schooling are the only options for children with disabilities;

(c) Not all children with disabilities enjoy the right to free and compulsory primary education or to affordable secondary education on the equal basis as others, as some of the public special schools do not provide education free of charge;

(d) Children with disabilities are forced to shift to special schools as they advance to higher levels of education and the rate of enrolment of persons with disabilities in tertiary education is low;

(e) The number of accessible means of transport is insufficient to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities and to allow them to participate fully in the education system.

46. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt and implement a coherent strategy on inclusive education in the mainstream educational system in accordance with article 24 of the Convention and with reference to Sustainable Development Goal 4, especially its targets 4.5 and 4.8. Through such a strategy, the State party should:**

(a) **Ensure the accessibility of school environments, the provision of reasonable accommodation, accessible and adapted materials and curricula, and the compulsory pre-service and in-service training of all teachers on inclusive education;**

(b) **Secure a sufficient number of accessible means of transport to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities;**

(c) **Set clear timelines, targets, baselines and indicators to secure time-bound and measurable progress;**

(d) **Allocate effective and adequate financial, material and adequately trained human resources.**

47. **The Committee recommends that the State party guarantee a legally enforceable right to inclusive, quality and free primary education and to affordable secondary education on an equal basis with others.**

48. **The Committee also recommends that the State party facilitate access for persons with disabilities to tertiary education and vocational training, including through the provision of reasonable accommodation in higher education.**

Health (art. 25)

49. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The current legislation on health insurance does not fully guarantee reimbursement or other forms of compensation to persons with disabilities for expenditures caused by disability when receiving treatment within the mainstreamed health system;

(b) The systemic barriers, including physical barriers, and the lack of accessible information, communication, training or treatment equipment, and health-care professionals trained in the human rights model of disability are limiting persons with disabilities' access to mainstream health services;

(c) Persons with disabilities face discrimination in accessing sexual and reproductive health care services due to the lack of accessible equipment suitable for use by all persons with disabilities, among other reasons.

50. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Take appropriate legislative measures to secure access for persons with disabilities to free and affordable health-related habilitation and rehabilitation goods and services;**

(b) **Train health personnel on the human rights model of disability, including on the right to free and informed consent, and ensure the accessibility of health-care facilities and equipment to ensure that all such facilities and equipment, including in hospitals and in the practices of dentists, gynaecologists and obstetricians, are accessible to persons with disabilities, regardless of their impairments;**

(c) **Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education, and ensure also the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes as set out in target 3.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

Work and employment (art. 27)

51. The Committee is seriously concerned at the commonly applied concept of "working incapacity", which results in a low employment rate among persons with disabilities, and at a singular focus on segregated work environments, such as social enterprises, to which European Union funds are being directed.

52. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, eliminate the concept of "working incapacity" of persons with disabilities and develop and implement efficient strategies and programmes aimed at increasing the employment rate of persons with disabilities in the open labour market, by eliminating segregated work environments and investing in promoting vocational training, access to appropriately adjusted workplaces, the provision of reasonable accommodation and the training of private and public employers, as set out in target 8.5 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

Adequate standard of living and social protection (art. 28)

53. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) Persons with disabilities face a higher risk of poverty than others;

(b) Part of the support provided to persons with disabilities is based on discounts and vouchers, which increases stigmatization and harmful stereotyping of persons with disabilities as a group that lacks autonomy and is dependent on social welfare.

54. **The Committee recommends that the State party adopt new policies that secure income levels among persons with disabilities and their families that are adequate and**

equal to the income levels of others, and that take into account additional disability-related costs.

55. The Committee is further concerned at reports indicating that public expenditures targeted specifically at persons with disabilities have decreased owing to budgetary reductions in the social insurance and social assistance system caused by the financial crisis since 2008.

56. **The Committee recommends that the State party take steps to secure that persons with disabilities and their families are not disproportionately affected by budget cuts and to ensure an adequate standard of living through income support and social security, taking note of target 1.3 of the Sustainable Development Goals, which calls on States to implement appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors.**

Participation in political and public life (art. 29)

57. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The Constitution denies persons with disabilities the right to vote and stand for election if they have been declared legally incapable;

(b) There is lack of reliable statistical information on the number of persons with disabilities who have been removed from the electoral register on grounds of disability;

(c) Current laws on election do not allow autonomous, free and secret participation by all persons with disabilities in the electoral process.

58. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities:**

(a) **Repeal provisions in the law and the Constitution denying the right of persons with disabilities to vote and stand for election, including by eliminating the possibility of declaring persons with disabilities legally incapable on the ground of disability;**

(b) **Restore voting rights to all people with disabilities who are excluded from the national voter registry;**

(c) **Collect reliable and disaggregated statistics and data on the political participation of persons with disabilities as voters and as candidates for election;**

(d) **Expedite the parliamentary approval of election laws to ensure the legally enforceable right of persons with disabilities to vote and have access to, among others, accessible ballots, election materials and polling stations, and the provision of freely chosen, adequate and necessary assistance in order to facilitate voting by all persons, regardless of impairment.**

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport (art. 30)

59. The Committee is concerned at reports stating that public cultural spaces such as the World Heritage sites of the United Nations Educational, Social and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) largely remain inaccessible to persons with disabilities. It is also concerned about the lack of State party documentation on how European Union structural funds contribute to the removal of barriers to accessibility.

60. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in close collaboration with representative organizations of persons with disabilities, take the steps necessary to secure and promote inclusive and accessible facilities for recreational, leisure and sporting activities, including UNESCO World Heritage sites, providing equal access to**

and participation for persons with disabilities, as set out in targets 11.2 and 11.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

61. The Committee is concerned that the State party, despite having expressed the will to ratify, pending collective ratification by the European Union, the Marrakesh Treaty to Facilitate Access to Published Works for Persons Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, or Otherwise Print Disabled, has not yet done so.

62. **The Committee recommends that the State party take all the measures necessary to ensure unilateral ratification and implementation of the Marrakesh Treaty without further delay.**

C. Specific obligations (arts. 31-33)

Statistics and data collection (art. 31)

63. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) There is a lack of disaggregated and reliable statistical data regarding persons with disabilities across all sectors;

(b) The statistical data relating to persons with disabilities collected by the State party fail to take into account the diversity of persons with disabilities, thereby rendering it impossible to evaluate the impact of each policy on persons with disabilities.

64. **The Committee recommends that the State party, in collaboration with organizations of persons with disabilities, systematize the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, residence, geographic area and types of support received, in relation to all sectors, taking note of target 17.18 of the Sustainable Development Goals.**

International cooperation (art. 32)

65. The Committee is concerned that disability rights have not been mainstreamed in the national, regional and global implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including in designing international development assistance.

66. **The Committee recommends that the rights of persons with disabilities be mainstreamed in the national implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals, and that all related processes, including those for defining international development assistance priorities, are undertaken in close cooperation with and with the involvement of organizations of persons with disabilities.**

National implementation and monitoring (art. 33)

67. The Committee is concerned that:

(a) The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, which is in charge of coordinating implementation of the Convention, lacks the legal mandate, authority and human and financial resources to influence other ministries and State institutions and to coordinate effective implementation the Convention, and that there is no strong focal point within each ministry responsible for implementing the Convention;

(b) The Office of Equal Opportunities Ombudsperson and the Council for the Affairs of the Disabled, which have been appointed to function as the State party's independent monitoring mechanisms, are not in full compliance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the

Paris Principles), notably because the Council falls under the mandate of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour;

(c) There is lack of consultation and involvement of representative organizations of persons with disabilities in monitoring the implementation of the Convention.

68. **The Committee recommends that the State party:**

(a) **Immediately take the steps necessary to empower and enable the Ministry of Social Security and Labour to coordinate the implementation of the Convention, and establish strong and efficient focal points within each ministry and State institution responsible for implementing the Convention;**

(b) **Remove the Council for the Affairs of the Disabled from the independent monitoring framework and, in consultation with organizations of persons with disabilities, expedite the establishment of an independent monitoring mechanism that is in compliance with the Paris Principles and that has the required expertise and access to sufficient resources in accordance with article 33 (2) of the Convention;**

(c) **Adopt legislation to guarantee the full participation of representative organizations of persons with disabilities in the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the Convention.**

IV. Follow-up

Dissemination of information

69. The Committee requests that the State party provide information, within 12 months of the adoption of the present concluding observations and in accordance with article 35 (2) of the Convention, on the measures taken to implement the Committee's recommendations contained in paragraphs 58 (on ensuring that everyone with a disability has the right to vote and stand for election) and 68 (b) (on establishing a monitoring mechanism in accordance with the Paris Principles).

70. The Committee requests the State party to implement the recommendations contained in the present concluding observations. It recommends that the State party transmit the concluding observations for consideration and action to members of the Government and parliament, officials in relevant ministries, members of relevant professional groups, such as education, medical and legal professionals, as well as to local authorities and the media, using modern social communication strategies.

71. The Committee strongly encourages the State party to involve civil society organizations, in particular organizations of persons with disabilities, in the preparation of its periodic report.

72. The Committee requests the State party to disseminate the present concluding observations widely, including to non-governmental organizations and representative organizations of persons with disabilities, and to persons with disabilities themselves and members of their families, in national and minority languages, including sign language, and in accessible formats, and to make them available on the government website on human rights.

Next periodic report

73. The Committee requests the State party to submit its combined second and third periodic reports by 18 September 2020 and to include in them information on the implementation of the recommendations made in the present concluding observations. The

Committee invites the State party to consider submitting the above-mentioned reports under the Committee's simplified reporting procedure, according to which the Committee prepares a list of issues at least one year prior to the due date set for the report of a State party. The replies of a State party to such a list of issues constitute its report.